Who are we?

Children's Studio School PCS
SY 2001-2002

Faculty and Staff

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School Year 2001-2002

Faculty

Carolivia Herron, Writer/Teacher

Carolivia writes fiction and scholarship, develops multimedia online educational products, establishes ad directs writing clubs in DC area schools, and teaches courses in creative writing and literature (African-American, Children's, Epic). In addition to her devotion to Children's Studio School children, Carolivia also directs the Potomac Anacostia Ultimate Story Exchange (PAUSE) which pairs elementary school children with email mentors from ccommunity service organizations, churches and her congregation, Tifereth Israel. During the 2000-2001 academic year, she managed a writing club at Hart Middle School for DC WriterCorps and will direct a similar program at Jos-Arz Academy this year. Carolivia is also the president of the Kiwanis Club of Northeast Washington.

Carolivia may be best known as the author of the controversial and celebrated children's book, *Nappy Hair*, which is extracted from her hypertext novel, *Asenath and Our Songs of Songs.* Her first novel, *Thereafter Johnnie*, has been re-issued for its tenth anniversary and she is also the editor of *Selected Works of Angelina Weld Grimke* (Oxford University Press, 1991). Three chapters of her work, *Peacesong* has been published in "Bridges Magazine" (August 2001).

Carolivia has taught Creative Writing at the University of Binghamton, New York and *Star Trek as American Epic* at Grinnell College. She has been a professor and/or visiting scholar at Harvard, Mount Holyoke, Brandeis, Hebrew College, California State and at Central African universities. Her Ph.D. is in Comparative Literature and Literature Theory from the University of Pennsylvania where she also received her Master's Degree in Creative Writing.

Kwelismith, Interdisciplinary Performance Artist, Poet, Vocalist, Songwriter, Educator and Activist

Kweismith is the author of two collections of poetry: *Slavesong, the art of singing; and Browngirl in the Ring.* Kweli began designing music and movement

programs for African American children while teaching vocal music in Washington, DC public schools. She is founding director of the Movement and Creative Arts Workshop, teaching literacy through dance for inner city youth. Kwelismith received a BS degree in Music Education from the University of Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and her Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology from Trinity College. She has studied dance and drumming, danced with the Memory of African Culture Dance Company and published *Secret Meeting: Kwaanza Songs* and *City Sound,* which is accompanied by a CD.

Carl Neita, Architect and Artist

Currently working on an illustrated storybook for boys, Carl has been an educator all his life, tutoring his nephews and nieces, working as a design studio tutor at the Caribbean School of Architecture / Jamaica and as a technology graduate assistant at Howard University ion Washington DC.

Carl comes from a long line of educators as his mother and sisters are educators in the fields of medicine, microbiology, sociology and law. Carl also completed a year of language training in Budapest, Hungary and then entered the prestigious BME Technical School of Architecture. In his native Jamaica, Carl worked as an architect for more than ten years, designing resorts and private homes. His culmination resulted in an award winning team-design for student housing at the University of the West Indies.

Carl entered Howard University's Fine Arts Graduate Program as a painter and quickly won a full scholarship and consecutive prizes in the school's annual graduate student show. He graduated from the department of Fine Arts with distinction.

Before coming to Children's Studio School, Carl returned to his first love, architecture working at American University. He has exhibited as a painter in Washington DC and internationally and is a part of local and other private art collections. He was granted the DC Commission on the Arts-National Endowment for the Arts grants for two consecutive years.

Maria R. Firmino-Castillo, Video/Visual Artist/ Cultural Anthropologist

As a practitioner of 'Experimental Ethnography', Maria strives to make familiar what is strange, and make strange what is familiar through the engaged observation and interpretation of her own and others' everyday realities. Maria's interests were probably provoked by the confusion of migrating between the many worlds in which she lived as a child: Guatemala,

El Salvador, Nicaragua, Italy, and the United States. What was first a practical need to understand difference later became a visceral fascination with the complexity and strangeness of mundane reality everywhere. A practical need remains, however, to make these realities, which are sometimes cruel, more livable. To do this she mixes the realist methods of the social scientist to *represent* reality with surrealist methods of the poet to *understand* it and the methods of the alchemist to *transmute* it. These labors have resulted in written, photographic and video essays on a variety of topics including post-war Guatemala, the epistemology of displacement, and the reinvention of the self through exile.
She is the mother of Amauta, who is now 8 years old and is a former student of Studio School's *City as Studio*. Maria has taught English for Speakers of Other Languages and Spanish to adults; she has taught photography at the Elders Institute of Florida International University, and multidisciplinary visual art in elementary schools and at the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind. In Guatemala she was involved in several informal popular education projects. Maria has a Masters in Cultural Anthropology and BFA in Photography and Art History.

Haniyyah T. Boxie, Interdisciplinary Arts
Haniyyah Boxie is a self-proclaimed Amazon and amalgamation of Spanish, Native American and French descent. Her major at Howard University was Sociology and Political Science with a secondary focus in music theory. A proponent of abolishment of slavery of the mind, Niyyah's commitment to social change brought her to the educational arena. She believes that children must be allowed to feel full ownership of themselves and ideas, and as whole and complete beings, deserve every right and responsibiltiy. Niyyah hopes to show through examples and experiences the purest most simple human essence, "infinite potential".

Ann Helfrich, Visual Artist
Ann was born in Pleasantville New Jersey, where she spent the first eighteen years of her life. Here she attended an alternative, parent co-op school, from the age of five to fourteen. At the age of sixteen she dropped out of high school and earned her GED. In the two years between high school and college she studied many things including animation and figure drawing as well working at a drug store and rebuilding the carburetor of her first car, a '69 Chevrolet Caprice. At eighteen Ann moved to Maine, where she attended

College of the Atlantic, and received a BA in Human Ecology, with a focus in visual arts. Ann was an intern at Children's Studio School for six months. She was an artist/teacher in the summer program of 2000, and has provided us with many kinds of additional support at various times over the past few years. She has also traveled across the US by Greyhound. Ann is a visual artist who works in many mediums including pencil and animation but especially prefers oil painting. Ann has been commissioned for a mural in the Pleasantville Public Library and a set of Stations of the Cross for an Episcopal Church in Northfield, NJ. Her most recent work was a series of life-sized portraits, painted in oil on both board and canvas. Her work, though simple in subject, is complex in content and style. She says that her paintings can not be explained in words for they are paintings, and therefore only to be understood with the eyes.

Helanius J. Wilkins, Choreography/Dance

Healnius is the recipient of the 2001 Metro DC Dance "Emerging Choreographer" award and founder/artistic director of EDEWORKS DANCE THEATRE (EDT), the first ever dance company of Black men based in Washington, DC. A native of Lafayette, Louisiana, Helanius has worked throughout the U.S. through funding by the Meredith Foundation, Regional Arts Commission, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts with choreography commissioned and included in the repertories of the Dance Institute of Washington, the Oakland Dance Theater Company and Stephens College where he was named the Emerging Choreographer for Summer Festival 2001. Helanius is the first and only choreographer from Washington DC to participate in the Monaco Danses Dance Forum as one of six American choreographers presenting in the International American Choreographers Showcase
Helanius has taught dance and choreography at the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Montgomery College and the Dance Institute of Washington where he served as Associate Artistic Director and Resident Choreographer for 1999-2000. A dance graduate of SUNY Brockport, Helanius is on the faculty at the Musical Theater Center and the Joy of Motion Dance Center.

John Murillo, Poet

John is a poet and essayist currently living in Washington DC. Originally from Los Angeles, he came to the District seven years ago to attend Howard University, where he earned his BA in Philosophy. His writings have

appeared in the *Howard University Journal of Philosophy, Ronaled E. McNair Journal of Research* and *The Drum*, which he also edits. He is a member of DC WriterCorps and was a coach of the 2001 DC National Teen Poetry Slam Team.

Desépé Thomson de Vargas, Architect/Photographer

Desépé is a Liberian-born architect and artist. She was introduced to the art of photography while she was pursuing her degree in architecture at Catholic University in Washington, DC her work has been exhibited throughout the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. Her work includes portraiture, editorial photography, public relations and events-based photography. She has taught photography to all ages at the Capitol Hill Arts Workshops, among other places, and has guided young people to explore and re-create their environment in the Architecture Program at the National Building Museum.

Desépé believes the process of creation itself is art, and that the end product is a manifestation and celebration of that process. She draws from the energies and images around her, tapping into the roots of her heritage and being open in heart and mind to the beauty and richness of the many cultures with which she exists.

Robert Northern A.K.A. Brother Ah, Musician/Composer/Performer and Teacher

Robert Northern is the musical director of the World Music Ensemble. He specializes in wind instruments, African drums and percussions. His primary instruments are french horn and flute. The World Music Ensemble released its first compact disc entitled Celebration in 1993. Among Brother Ah's extensive accomplishments, he is also the musical director of the Sounds of Awareness musical collective. As a lecturer and instructor, he has taught at the Levine School of Music, Sewell Music Conservatory, DC public and private schools, Howard University, UDC, U.Md., the Smithsonian Institution and the Kennedy Center. Additionally, he has taught at Brown for 9 years, Dartmouth College for 3 years, Talledega College, the New York City public schools, the African Learning Center and privately.

Among his works are "Ode to Creation", "The Forces of Nature", and "Tribute to the Anscestors". As a french hornist, he has played and recorded with musical greats, including Thelonius Monk, Miles Davis, McCoy Tyner, Freddie Hubbard, Sun Ra, Dizzy Gillespie, Eric Dolphy, Max Roach,

and John Lewis. His classical performances include the New York Metropolitan Opera stage band with George Solti, the Symphony of the Air with Stokowski, the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra and symphony orchestras in Vienna, Austria and West Germany as well as on Broadway. Robert Northern studied at the Manhattan School of Music, the Vienna State Academy and is a graduate of Hoard University.

Artie Smoote, Visual Artist, Assitant Artist/teacher
Artie is a native of Oklahoma who graduated from the University of Oklahoma in Fine Arts. In New York City, he worked for A.M.A.S. Repertory Theatrical Company and in the Art Departments of other companies as well. He has been engaged in visual and performing arts projects as an artist and arts educator, and his work is represented in exhibitions and institutional art collections. Artie develops and delivers community-based arts educational projects. Artie has worked at the Children's Studio School since relocating from New York to DC.

Fumiyo Hashida, Dancer/Choreographer/
Assitant Artist/teacher
Fumiyo is originally from Japan. She graduated from Tokyo Women's Physical Education College, and has been in the United States for seven years. She is a dancer and teacher, having performed in Washington, DC and New York. She has taught Creative and Modern Dance to children as well as Dance and Exercise for Senior Citizens. This is Fumiyo's third year at Children's Studio School. She is very happy to share Japanese Culture with children.

Sandra Guiloff, Visual Artist
Sandra was born in Chile and has lived in Venezuela, New York and now Washington DC where she attends American University's graduate program in Art with a concentration in painting. A multi-faceted individual, Sandra has organized exhibitions and created installments. She has studied theatre, enjoys writing, music and travel. Sandra is interested in providing workshops for people of all ages and a diversity of participants, experiencing the integration of artistic areas such as dance, theater, literature and poetry.

Staff

Franklin Wassmer, Multi-diciplinary Artist/Associate Director
Franklin grew up in Switzerland in a family where the arts were very present. After surpassing difficulties in school, he received his baccalaureate in math and science. Franklin went on to pursue a career as a professional ballet and modern dancer, dancing with the Monte Carlo Ballet Company and other companies in Europe and the United States. Franklin is also a sculptor and performance artist. He performs his own work, individually and in collaboration with other artists in alternative center and museums in DC and in other cities. For the last nine years he has been working to develop ways to improve education by bringing the creative and innovative nature of our minds together in the educational process. Franklin has been working with Children's Studio School for ten years as an artist/teacher and program coordinator. At the Studio School, he organized exhibits and performances including *ReMark* at the Astraea Gallery and *Despaced;* at the Studio School, he has also organized the City As Studio programs. Franklin has coordinated the school's transformation into a public charter school and its complex operation and progress over the past four years.

Lisa Buchsbaum, Musician/Writer/Coordinator and Administrator
Lisa has worked as a journalist, composer, performing musician, recording artist, arts promoter, fundraiser, software specialist, teacher of students of all ages, and counselor for developmentally disabled adults. A long time catalyst for the arts, Lisa has advocated for funding of inter- and transcultural arts exchanges, and produced performance experiences highlighting multi-diciplinary works. She has visited various countries and cultures including Brazil to experience the pandera in percussion ensemble work, Morocco to hear the oud played in traditional settings, and Puerto Rico where she participated in plena, bomba and navidenas. She sang alto in a gospel choir in the United States and in a liturgical choir in the Caribbean. Through a grant from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts, Lisa is showing her work in collaboration with dancer and former Studio School artist, Josephine Nicholson. Lisa has a BA in Music, *cum laude*, from the University of Virginia, with graduate course work in curriculum and social foundations of education. She earned her MBA, *summa cum laude*, from Universidad

Metropolitana, As Vice-President of Temple Beth Shalom, Lisa has lead fundraising and advocacy efforts for Make-A-Wish, Habitat for Humanity, the American Lupus Society and Bill's Kitchen which serves those living with HIV. She is an active volunteer with the City Council of Takoma Park, is a member of the Board of U.Md.'s CivicSource Website and continues to work on her life-long project, a novel titled, "Trusting the Rope".

Noemy Rivera-Guiterrez, Administrative Assistant

Noemy Rivera- Guiterrez was born in El Salvador and came to the United States fifteen years ago. She developed an interest in Art through drawing, painting, architecture, photography and pottery during middle- and high school. She graduated from Woodrow Wilson High and is now attending Strayer University in Business Management. Noemy believes that everyone must pursue their dreams, and brings an appreciation of art and education to Children's Studio School.

Noemy conducts the day to day work in the main office, as well as other responsibilities in the School. She facilitates the enrollment process, and overall office administration. Of her four beautiful children, Carlos and Irma attend Children's Studio School. Noemy is knowledgeable and is always available to parents and families to address any concerns or questions.

Karen Williams, Administrative Assistant

Karen is a former military child, which has given her the opportunity to live in and visit many different places, including Okinawa, Boston, California and Texas among others. Karen graduated from the Academy of Notre Dam in Washington, DC and attended George Washington University. Karen's proudest achievement in life is her two wonderful boys, Courtney and Michael, who attend Children's Studio School. Karen has worked as junior editor for Bell Communications Research, office manager for National Association of Re-development (NAR) and staffing agent for Ronstad.

Margarita (Maggie) Avedisian, Ph.D., Clinical Child Psychologist, School-Based Mental Health Clinician.

Born in Istanbul Turkey, Maggie migrated to Washington, DC at the age of three. Maggie attended DC public schools, and later completed her Doctorate in Developmental Psychology at Catholic University. Maggie has worked at the National Institute of Child Development investigating the effects of early childcare on social and emotional development. She moved

to Miami, Florida and as an Associate Professor at the University of Miami, studied the development of infants and toddlers born to mothers addicted to crack cocaine. After three years she returned to DC to pursue a Clinical Child Psychology degree. Maggie has extensive experience in individual, group and family therapy. Her holistic approach to therapy is based on the empowerment of family members through developing skills and utilization of community based support. Maggie has a passion for music, drama and dance, particularly as it relates to her Armenian culture. She is devoted to her family, to maintaining balance in her life, and to completing her writings for a parent self-help guide.

Djenaba Faal, Special Programs Coordinator

Djenaba is a teacher, performer and presenter dedicated to securing a respected place for African subjects in a multicultural pedagogy. Known for her dynamic teaching style, Mama Djeneba began her teaching career as an instructor of the Academy of Traditional and Contemporary African Arts and History. She went on to serve as teacher, trainer, administrator, curriculum coordinator and youth outreach program coordinator for University of California at San Diego, Southwest Community College, Asante Academy, Davis Education Center and the Ministries of Culture and Education in Belize. She is also a certified special education and adult education teacher.

As a listed roster artist specializing in African Folk Art, Djeneba has been an artist and educator in such places as Arizona, Alaska, California, New Mexico, Belize and North Carolina. After completing two undergraduate degrees In Theatre, Djeneba went on to graduate studies at Arizona State University in Intercultural Communications. She has conducted travel study focusing on African retention in oral literary traditions of the Caribbean, Central American and the Urbana Women of Senegambia. She is currently continuing graduate studies in Education Administration and is awaiting publication of her book "Mrembo Mtoto, An African Inspired Baby Book."

Cardella Beatty-Coghill, Parent Lisason

Cardella was born and raised in Washington, DC where she attended Cleveland Elementary School, Brent Elementary on Capitol Hill, and Hine Junior High. After attending High School in New York, Cardella went on to attend Howard University in Business and the Washington Culinary Institute. Cardella worked for the Marriot Corporation as Food Service Manager at

George Washington University for seven years. She was the Resource Coordinator at Kelsey Gardens, has worked as a community liaison for the metropolitan police department for four years, and currently is the owner-operator of Sweeties Catering Service. Cardella has participated in the restoration of Howard Theatre, the 7th and T Street Restoration Project and giving guidance to young mothers. She believes in giving back to her community and being humanitarian, values she passes down to her children which include her shining star, Aaron who attends Children's Studio School.

Julie Camerata, Special Education Coordinator

Julie has been living and working in Washington, DC for the past seven years. She began by coordinating educational programs for educators at the Capital Children's Museum. She left the museum to work on her Master's in Transition Special Education at GW. While in school, she taught math and science at a high school for emotionally disturbed youth. From there, she taught for two years at Wilson SHS. After Wilson, she made the jump to charter schools and program creation/administration. She began by developing the special education program at the Washington Math Science Technology Charter High School in SW. Currently, she works part-time at three neighborhood charter schools. She doesn't consider herself an artist but she enjoys photography, collage, and mobile making.

Sleeprell T. Rice-Brizuela, Bookkeeping Specialist

Sleeprell is a native Washingtonian. As a youngster, it was quite evident that her unseen direction would inevitably lead her to the heartfelt joy of children. Early studies in Child Behavior and Development led to an interest in social work where she spent several years identifying and assessing the health and social service needs of abused pregnant women. Because of her desire to aid in the development of policies, protocol, procedures and fundraising in the non-profit sector, Sleeprell began her career in bookkeeping.

Sleeprell holds a degree in Business Operations and Accounting from NEC. She has also studied and taken courses at Montgomery College in Business Administration, Social Development and Communications, George Washington University's Saturday College in Computer Technology, Trinity College and University of District of Columbia. As a bookkeeping specialist, administrator, and business owner with nearly 13 years of experience in

retail, private business and in the non-profit sector, Sleeprell finds herself once again seeing life at its finest through the eyes of babes.

Aqila Williams, Bookkeeping Assistant
Aqila is a native of Trinidad and is currently employed by STR Bookkeeping Services. She studied Early Childhood Development at Montgomery College and is now majoring in Accounting at the University of Maryland.

Molly Bryant, Support and Security
Molly has been a crossing guard for the 7th District Police Department for four years. She is a native New Yorker, and later moved to Washington DC where she graduated from McKinley High. She attended UDC where she majored in Psychology. For more than twenty years, Molly has worked with infants, children, the elderly, and the disabled. She loves writing, reading, playing backgammon, and spending time with her lovely son, Davon, who attends Children's Studio School. Molly assists on the playground and in paths Studio. She believes that children need nurturing, love, and above all, safety.

David Cogsdale, Custodial and Construction
David is a native Washingtonian. He went to school at Cardoza High. He enjoys travel and participates in various community activities throughout the city. He enjoys kids, always has a ready smile, and describes his sense of humor as "off the hook". We agree.

Ernest Thomas, Security and School Support
Ernest is a DC native and attended Phelps High School. He is active in the Shaw and Adams Morgan communities. He enjoys kids and sports, and has served as the ultimate grandfather figure for our school.

Joy Hellams, Security
Joy is a diligent security guard and a pleasant presence at Children's Studio School. She graduated from Dunbar High and enjoys all kinds of sports and spending time with her two children. Since working at Children's Studio School, she has become very interested in children's development through the Arts.